

GRIFFISS AIR FORCE BASE NEW YORK

EPA ID# NY4571924451



EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 23
Oneida County
2 miles northeast of Rome

Site Description

The Griffiss Air Force Base site, which began operation since 1943, encompasses 3,552 acres and was home to the 416th Combat Support Group under the Air Combat Command. Various wastes, including solvents and lead from battery acids, were generated from research and development activities in the industrial shops and laboratories. These wastes were disposed of in landfills and dry wells. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) have been detected in groundwater on the base. The area immediately surrounding the base is primarily agricultural, with a few residential areas. The City of Rome is southwest of the base and has a population of 50,000. About 95% of the local population obtains water from the municipal water supply system. The source of this supply is upgradient from the base; however, some private wells are used to irrigate crops. The Town of Floyd, a community of over 300 homes southeast of the base, has received its water from private wells. The base is located in the Mohawk River Valley and is situated among the Mohawk River, Six Mile Creek, and the New York State Barge Canal (Erie Canal).

Site Responsibility:

This site is being addressed through
Federal actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY

Proposed Date: 11/01/84

Final Date: 07/01/87

Threats and Contaminants



Groundwater, at portions of the base, is contaminated with VOCs. Soil is contaminated with heavy metals including lead, chromium, and barium, as well as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs and SVOCs have been found in Three Mile and Six Mile Creeks.



Private water wells off base are used for irrigation and drinking water. Contaminants may accumulate in food crops and pose a health hazard to those who eat them. In addition, people who touch or accidentally ingest the contaminated soil may suffer adverse health effects.



Contamination in the form of leachate from the landfills, discharges from old storm sewers and accidental spills may have contributed to contamination of the creeks. Pollutants from these sites may be harmful to wildlife and aquatic populations.

Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed through either interim remedial actions (namely an Air Force removal action attempting to address the cleanup of the site) or through the CERCLA RI/FS remedial action process. To expedite several site cleanups, a presumptive remedy approach has been applied.

Response Action Status



Immediate Action: As an interim action in 1990, the Air Force began providing bottled water for residents affected by contaminated well water and provided funds to the community to construct an extension of the municipal water supply to replace the contaminated wells. Hook-ups to the water supply extension were available by late 1991 and most affected residents have availed themselves to these supply extensions. Underground storage tanks and contaminated soil were removed from the base between 1985 and 1989 and a program to remove or replace all tanks on base has been completed. In 1997, Griffiss performed several removals of: PCB contaminated soil/sediment; petroleum contaminated soil; several drywells and sumps used in the disposal of liquid waste; and one small landfill used to house low level radioactive tubes.



Entire Site: Griffiss Air Force Base has conducted a study to determine the extent of contamination to the groundwater, soil, and the remainder of the base. Thirty-one areas of concern (AOCs) have been identified for investigation, including landfills and drywells. The draft Remedial Investigation (RI) report for these 31 AOCs was submitted in September of 1995 and was reviewed by EPA and NYSDEC. After several discussions, the regulators and the Air Force

met and reached an agreement to use a presumptive remedy approach at several sites (landfills) which will eliminate the need for an FS and expedite cleanup. Records of decision (RODs) for these sites have been approved and design documents are currently under review. In addition, based upon supplemental RI data other sites are now seeking no further action approval based upon future land use and appropriate deed restrictions. Of the 16 RODs issued, 9 sites have approved RODs which indicate no further action provided the land use remains the same and the stipulated deed restrictions are followed. Finally, additional areas of interest (AOIs sites) have also been identified. Some are completing their investigation, others will proceed to RODs and others require no further action. Two AOI sites have recently been classified as AOCs and will proceed through the CERCLA RI/FS process.

Site Facts: An Interagency Agreement among the EPA, the State, and Griffiss Air Force Base to clean up the site was signed in June 1990. The public was concerned over contamination of some Floyd wells and, as a result, the Air Force agreed to provide bottled water and to fund replacement. In addition, Griffiss Air Force Base is participating in the Installation Restoration Program, a specially funded program established by the Department of Defense (DOD) in 1978 to identify, investigate, and control the migration of hazardous contaminants at military and other DOD facilities.

Environmental Progress



Regarding the wells in the town of Floyd which were impacted by contamination from the base, provisions of safe drinking water has eliminated any potential of exposure to hazardous substances in the water. The municipal water distribution system was extended into the area of contaminated wells and was made available to the affected residences.

An EPA funded program to provide sampling and testing of residential wells over a wider area has determined that off-base contamination is not more extensive than previously found in Floyd. This monitoring program was conducted jointly by EPA and NYSDOH to determine if off-base well contamination extended beyond the Floyd area as noted above. Results of a one and one half year test program were negative and indicate that the contamination has been limited to Floyd. Supplemental investigations of the groundwater at Griffiss have shown no migration of contaminants off-base.

The remaining identified areas of concern on the base have been grouped into non-time critical removal actions and into several operable units (OUs) to facilitate the determination and initiation of optimum remediations. Preliminary field work which initially commenced in the fall of 1993 and continued through the field work of various investigations have been reviewed and appropriate action plans are being developed and implemented.

Griffiss was designated for base realignment under BRAC 93 in the summer of 1993. Plans (BRAC cleanup plans/BCP) for base cleanup to facilitate realignment are completed and are updated regularly. The BCP is an outgrowth of the existing AF Management Action Plan for the base developed under the federal facilities agreement with EPA and NYSDEC under CERCLA. Griffiss is also seeking to transfer portions of the base property in advance of required cleanup (as newly allowed under CERCLA/CERFA) through the covenant deferral request (CDR) process. Five early transfer areas have already been approved by EPA and the State and another parcel is currently under review. CDRs allow the Air Force the ability to transfer property, with appropriate restrictions, prior to

completing the remediation process provided the Air Force make various guarantees to complete the cleanup as agreed upon and according to an agreed upon schedule as a condition of the CDR.